



Vogelsang Backcountry Utilities Improvement Project

Project Background

Vogelsang is one of Yosemite's five high sierra camps and is located approximately 7.5 miles south of the Tioga Road in the Tuolumne Meadows area. This High Sierra Camp was originally established on the north shore of Booth Lake in 1923, which proved to be an undesirable location due to poor drainage and an abundance of mosquitoes. The camp's present location on Fletcher Creek was established in 1940, and is the highest of the five camps at an elevation of 10,300 feet.



Vogelsang High Sierra Camp Below Fletcher Peak.

This proposed project incorporates three separate rehabilitation and repair projects within the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp (VHSC) and the adjacent Backpackers Camp. These include: *Vogelsang HSC Water System Upgrade Project*, *Wastewater Upgrade Project*, and the *Replacement of the Backpackers Camp Composter*.

What is the purpose and need of this project?

The purpose of the Vogelsang Backcountry Utility Upgrade project is to upgrade the Vogelsang HSC drinking water and wastewater systems to meet National Park Service (NPS), state, and federal drinking water and wastewater treatment standards, and to replace the non- operational backpacker composting toilet.

VHSC Water System Improvement:

Since the establishment of this camp, water has been supplied by a spring. The original spring was utilized until the 1960s, at which time it was deemed susceptible to contamination. A new subsurface water intake gallery was installed at the base of Fletcher Peak, along with a 2,000 gallon concrete water storage tank. This system served the camp well until 2000, at which point the tank began to leak and required extensive work. Currently, a temporary 300 gallon plastic tank is being used for storage.

The drinking water is not meeting National Park Service standards or California Department of Health Services standards (CDHS) for the following reasons:

- NPS Public Health Program requires that the water be disinfected.
- CDHS regulations require the National Park Service to have an emergency disinfection system or plan in place and that the plan be immediately implementable if necessary.
- Yosemite has received deficiency notifications and must make improvements to meet standards.
- Vogelsang High Sierra Camp water system storage tank leaks.
- The water intake gallery may be under surface water influence. Additional monitoring of the system may be required.

VHSC Wastewater System Improvement:

Original wastewater facilities at this HSC were comprised of pit toilets. These were replaced with flush toilets and cesspools that eventually incorporated a septic tank and leach field system in the 1960s. Over the years this system has required multiple projects to add in and repair these facilities. Notably, the system improvements were not installed per design. Consequently, the system has never performed properly.

The wastewater disposal system at the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp (VHSC) is not meeting the Regional Water Quality Control Board treatment standards for the following reasons:

- VHSC wastewater system leach field and dosing tank were not constructed to design specifications. Currently, the system consists of PVC piping laid above ground and has a dosing tank that does not work.
- The raised mound system was not constructed to the proper size or depth specifications nor was it constructed of the proper material. Backcountry utilities made an attempt to improve treatment by installing a surface strip system.



Above: Raised mound system; Below: Surface strip system



VHSC Backpackers Camp Composter System Upgrade:

The Backpackers Camp at Vogelsang is located approximately 0.2 miles northeast of the High Sierra Camp near Fletcher Lake. The Backpackers Camp composting toilet, constructed in 1984, and has been closed since 2004 partially due to extensive damage caused by marmots. The facility has also aged and has exceeded its intended design life.

In addition, the existing composting facility has never provided proper treatment of waste, in part because the composting bin was not sized for the high volume of use. The facility had been receiving an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 uses per year prior to closure. As a result, park staff had to haul out un-composted human waste by helicopter and mule pack train 3 to 4 times per year. This practice created health and safety issues for both employees and visitors to the area.

Initial outreach and public scoping for this project will occur during winter 2007/2008.

Public Participation

Public participation is essential for the success of this and all other park projects. Here are some ways to stay involved in the future of the park:

- **Attend a National Park Service public open house** to talk with project specialists and obtain more information on this and other topics. Visit the park's planning website (listed below) for upcoming dates.
- **Add your name to the park's planning list** and receive the *Planning Update* newsletter as well as other planning-related notices. You can also submit your email address to receive the park's periodic electronic newsletter.
- **Additionally, you can submit comments** with your thoughts about this topic or any other project in the park by any of the following means:
 - **Mail:** Superintendent
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389
 - **Phone:** 209/379- 1365; **Fax:** 209/379- 1294
 - **E- mail:** Yose_Planning@nps.gov
- **Visit online:** www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/planning.htm to find out about plans and projects.